AIDS amongst Army personnel

925. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Army personnel have been found infected with AIDS and if so, the number of such personnel at present;

(b) whether some affected personnel have been removed from the services and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government had received any protest/representation from the National AIDS Control Organization against the removal of such persons from services and if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) It is not correct that a large number of Armed Forces personnel are found infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). In fact, the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Armed Forces is significantly lower than that of the general population.

HIV infected personnel are retained in service and those suffering from the full AIDS are initially provided anti-retroviral therapy, as per the World Health Organisation criteria. They are assessed periodically by blood tests and retained in service provided they show improvement in the overall clinical profile. Otherwise these persons are invalided out of service and they are given anti-retroviral therapy for life, as ex-servicemen. 104 personnel were invalided out of services during 2004.

No protest/representation has been received from the National AIDS Control Organisation against removal of such personnel from service.

Defence cooperation agreement between India and Philippines

926. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Philippines signed an agreement on defence cooperation between the two countries during the recent visit of the hon'ble President to Manila;

(b) if so, the details of cooperation worked out between the two countries; and

(c) how the Ministry of Defence is going to be benefited from this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The 'Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning Defence Cooperation' was signed during the visit of Honourable President to Philippines in February 2006.

(b) The Agreement envisages enhanced defence cooperation in various fields for the mutual benefit of India and Philippines.

(c) An enhanced engagement and stronger defence cooperation with the Philippines which is an important member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), is in consonance with India's 'Look East policy' of closer ties with the countries of Southeast Asia.

Dhruv Crashes

†927. SHRI AJAY MAROO:
SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the helicopter 'Dhruv' manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. has often crashed at many places due to mechanical and technical defects prevailing in it;

(b) whether it is a fact that due to faults in design of the helicopter defects have been noted in the transmission and rotor of tail gear box;

(c) whether it is a fact that a number of countries including Israel have shown their hesitation to acquire 'Dhruv' helicopter after incidents of crash; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) there have been two incidents of forced landing of Dhruv helicopters so far.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.